

Repair and Maintenance: Management Briefing

The responsibility and requirement for repair and maintenance of premises and all plant and equipment put to use in a business is clearly set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

What are the key risk areas associated with repair and maintenance?

These are the safety issues of the task itself and also the risks associated with failure to adequately repair and maintain plant, equipment and premises.

Consideration must also be given to the business impact of plant and equipment failure due to poor maintenance regimes.

Repair and maintenance activities can be broken down into a number of types of maintenance:

- statutory inspections
- planned preventative maintenance
- breakdown maintenance

These can all be complimented by a regime of regular user/operator checks and inspections.

How should the risks be managed?

- Establish a procedure for the selection of plant and equipment which is fit for purpose
- prepare a full inventory/asset register of all plant and equipment
- identify the plant and equipment required to have statutory inspections
- identify all plant and equipment requiring planned preventative maintenance
- establish breakdown maintenance arrangements based on risk assessment and foreseeable risks
- establish shut down and lock out procedures for maintenance on moving machinery
- ensure that the business impact of any plant and equipment failures is recognised

Case Study

Two companies were each fined £233,000 after a woman was crushed to death by a lift at a health club in central London in a court case in 2010.

Katarzyna Woja, 32, was stepping out of a lift at the Holmes Place health club in the Broadgate complex, when the incident took place on 12 March 2003. As she was leaving the lift, she became trapped in between the doors as they closed. The elevator suddenly dropped, which caused her to be crushed against the wall of the lift shaft. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Holmes Places Health Clubs Ltd appeared in court on 14 May and pleaded guilty to breaching s2(1) and s3(1) of the HSWA 1974, and reg.5 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998, for failing to protect people being trapped or crushed by the lift. In addition to the fine, it was ordered to pay £170,000 in costs.

The lift manufacturer Thyssen Krupp Elevator UK appeared at the same hearing and pleaded guilty to breaching s3(1) of the HSWA 1974. It was ordered to pay £205,000 in costs.

Disclaimer

These example Director's Briefings are provided by Hettle Andrews for general guidance on matters of interest. In making these documents available to a general and diverse audience it is not possible to anticipate the requirements or the hazards of any subscriber's business. Users are therefore advised to carefully evaluate the contents. Hettle Andrews does not accept any liability whatsoever for injury, damage or other losses which may arise from reliance on this information and the use of these documents.

Copyright of these documents remains with Hettle Andrews and whilst subscribers are permitted to make use of them for their own purposes, permission is not granted for resale of the intellectual property to third parties.